

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of)
)
Amendment of Parts 21, 22, 23 and)
25 of the Commission's Rules To)
Require Reporting of Station)
Frequency and Technical Parameters)
for Registration by the Commission)
with the International Frequency)
Registration Board)

CC Docket No. 92-160

ORIGINAL
FILE

COMMENTS OF GTE SERVICE CORPORATION

GTE Service Corporation and
its affiliated domestic
telephone, satellite and cellular
companies

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September 28, 1992

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SUMMARY

This NPRM would require industry input to develop an automated database containing an extraordinary amount of redundant data for satellite-based services. But it is not likely to enhance the Commission's capability to perform interference analysis and protection. The proposed rules would substantially increase regulatory costs for the satellite industry, and can be expected to further increase the FCC processing time for new earth stations within the coordination distance of our borders. No benefits would be derived by United States domestic satellite operators and their customers if the rules were implemented as proposed in NPRM. Finally, implementation would further stretch the Commission's limited staff resources.

In order to achieve the stated objectives in this NPRM, GTE recommends that the Commission: (1) require only the coordination information currently provided by the domestic coordination process; (2) exclude Ku-Band services from the filing requirements, (3) exclude C-Band receive-only earth stations unless the applicant specifically requests protection from potential international interference, and (4) initiate United States efforts to streamline current IFRB requirements.

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COMMENTS OF GTE SERVICE CORPORATION

GTE Service Corporation and its affiliated domestic telephone, satellite and cellular companies ("GTE"), hereby submits their Comments on the above-referenced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("NPRM") released July 30, 1992. In the NPRM, the Commission proposes to establish an automated database in order to protect domestic licensees at risk of harmful interference to and from foreign carriers, and to improve reporting of frequency assignments to the International Frequency Registration Board ("IFRB"). For input into this database, the Commission proposes the submission of very detailed technical operating information by United States radio station licensees that operate in geographic areas most likely to require international coordination.

GTE applauds the Commission's efforts to improve the frequency coordination process for services near to our international borders. However, GTE opposes the specific requirements proposed by the Commission to facilitate this coordination, on the grounds that the requirements are burdensome

to applicants, will unnecessarily delay the licensing process, and, most importantly, are not necessary to accomplish the Commission's interference protection objectives.

DISCUSSION

- I. **The proposed filing requirements call for detailed information that will exceed the coordination data necessary to guard against potential international interference concerns.**

Implementation of the rules proposed under this NPRM would, in GTE's opinion, subject industry to unnecessary and costly new regulation. The reporting requirements would be particularly burdensome for the satellite industry -- an industry already subject to significant competition from alternate media which would be exempted from these requirements.

The information requirements contained in the Attachments of the NPRM appear to be excessive and duplicative across several line items, and, at a minimum, should be reviewed for redundancy and streamlining.¹ Preparation of this information for earth stations on a case-by-case basis will be expensive and time consuming to prepare and will predictably slow the FCC's

¹ Also, the information appears to address adjacent satellite interference concerns as well as terrestrial interference. Satellite coordination with international operators is already conducted by private industry in conjunction with FCC staff in meetings with foreign authorities. The information in Attachment 3 that would be used for satellite coordination is, therefore, not necessary to ensure against adjacent satellite interference.

processing time for licensing.² Any further delays in the licensing process will serve only to disadvantage the satellite industry and particularly users of very small aperture terminal ("VSAT") technology vis-a-vis less regulated media.

GTE is also concerned that the preparation and processing of required information for point-to-point microwave applications would create further delay to the current licensing process. GTE makes extensive use of point-to-point microwave to link cellular base stations. Today, the processing time for microwave applications is substantially longer than the processing time for cellular applications. Any additional delay to this process could significantly forestall needed cellular network changes and directly affect the cost and quality of cellular service to the public.

Furthermore, implementation of an automated database as proposed in the NPRM will not realize the Commission's stated goal of being able to protect common carriers from international interference. The Commission currently relies on private industry to coordinate frequency usage and resolve interference conflicts if they should occur. There are only a few providers of this very specialized service in the United States, and the

² GTE is particularly concerned that the Commission proposes to apply these requirements to all applications for Part 25 facilities, regardless of location. Proposed Section 25.115(d) appears to set some delimiters (*i.e.*, only stations that have coordination contours as defined by Appendix 28 of the international Radio Regulations). However, Section 25.115 (e) appears to set the requirement to all earth stations. GTE requests clarification of the FCC's intent.

interference analysis and frequency coordination process is labor intensive and, therefore, costly. Unlike the more centralized regulatory agencies in other countries, the FCC has traditionally not provided these coordination services, and the creation of an automated database would not appear to change the status quo.

It is, therefore, unclear to what extent the Commission will be able to make use of the voluminous data that it would receive from both United States carriers and foreign carriers. Presumably, the Commission would function as the coordination agent for a foreign carrier and contract with one of the commercial frequency coordination firms to determine if a proposed foreign station would cause interference to, or receive interference from, United States-based terrestrial or satellite earth stations.

In any case, GTE does not agree that the voluminous data requirements are necessary to achieve international coordination objectives. GTE firmly believes that the information currently generated in domestic frequency coordinations is sufficient to meet the Commission's requirements. The coordination between satellite and terrestrial users has functioned extremely well in the United States for many years. There is no reason why this same technical information should not be sufficient for international coordination purposes.

GTE therefore recommends that the Commission streamline the application filing requirement to require only the information currently generated by the domestic frequency coordination process.

II. The filing requirements should not be mandated for satellite earth stations licensed in the 12/14 GHz band or for receive-only earth stations in the 4/6 GHz band.

GTE supports the Commission's efforts to improve the international coordination process where terrestrial and satellite frequencies are shared on a co-primary basis (i.e., in the 4/6 GHz ("C-Band")). However, the interference concerns that exist with respect to C-Band operations do not exist in the 12/14 GHz ("Ku-Band"), a fact which domestically has allowed Ku-Band facilities to be licensed without a formal frequency coordination. GTE does not see the justification for imposing coordination requirements on earth stations that operate in the Ku-Band, which is specifically set aside under international agreement for these Fixed-Satellite Services in Region II. Further, in GTE's experience, there has been no interference in the Ku-Band which would justify the excessive reporting requirements proposed by the NPRM. GTE, therefore, adamantly opposes the inclusion of Ku-Band facilities in these additional reporting requirements.

GTE submits that the existing benefits of the Ku-Band blanket licensing Order,³ which has greatly expanded the range of VSAT services currently provided to the public, would only be negated by delayed licensing as a result of the proposed requirements. The existing rapid deployment allowed under Ku-

³ Routine Licensing of Large Networks of Small Antenna Earth Stations Operating in the 12/14 GHz Frequency Bands, 51 Fed. Reg. 15067 (April 22, 1986).

Band blanket licensing is key to the success of the VSAT industry, and this flexibility must not be endangered. In addition, because receive-only earth stations are not of concern in causing interference, GTE strongly recommends that any reporting obligations be required of C-Band receive-only earth station applicants only if the applicant specifically desires and requests protection from potential international interference.

III. The United States should take action to eliminate or streamline IFRB reporting requirements for certain services in Region 2 where information is no longer essential.

GTE understands that international agreements may require frequency coordination and registration with the IFRB. GTE supports these requirements within the context of cost to benefit, but submits that the coordination and registration requirements for satellite services are excessive at a time when these services have matured to a degree which makes this proposed new filing requirement unnecessary.

The IFRB requirements may have been appropriate during the early days of satellite communication, especially in the more congested central European environment of Region I. But they have now to a large extent outlived their usefulness for the United States and its neighboring countries in Region II. Operating parameters for satellites are now well-documented, and satellite orbital assignments are effectively administered by the FCC and foreign administrations. In addition, the FCC has set limits on the transmission parameters for United States earth stations and satellites to further reduce the possibility of

interference between satellite services. For these reasons, GTE believes that it is no longer necessary to document the operating parameters for each satellite that is to be accessed by an earth station, and that there is no justification for interchanging more data than is currently required for in-country frequency coordination. Specific frequency assignments, when appropriate, can certainly be reported to the IFRB in a more efficient manner than proposed under this NPRM.

In light of the above, GTE recommends that the United States take action either to eliminate or streamline the IFRB filing requirements insofar as they are no longer necessary to safeguard certain services within Region 2.

IV. The proposed filing requirements should be consistent and clarified.

The proposed rules for Parts 21 and 22 require reporting of point-to-point microwave and cellular information for the State of Hawaii. The need to report information for Hawaii is unclear as this area does not seem to fall under the category of zones at risk of interference to or from foreign carriers.

At present an agreement between the United States and Mexico⁴ sets a parameter of 72 km in which cellular frequencies must be coordinated. Beyond 72 km on each side of the common

⁴ See Agreement Between the Governments of the United States of America and the United Mexican States Regarding Conditions for Utilization of the Bands 825-845 MHz and 870-890 MHz, For Public Radiocommunications Services Using Cellular Systems Along the Common U.S.-Mexican Border.

border, frequencies can be used on a non-coordinated basis. The proposed rule sets a parameter of 120 km. GTE suggests the Commission use the 72 km standard as agreed by both governments.

The Commission should specifically identify the types of applications and modifications which must include the magnetic disk. There is no reference in this proposal of the use of point-to-point microwave stations under a temporary-fixed authorization -- which only requires a notification to the Commission, not an approval. The NPRM is also silent on Special Temporary Authority ("STA") requests.

GTE also requests that the Commission be more specific in identifying the information that would be required in the various data fields. The draft FCC Report 22-01 requires that "Assigned Frequency" and "Reference Frequency" be reported. Cellular carriers are assigned a block with many channel groups in the block. Each channel group contains multiple frequencies. The proposal does not indicate how this information is to be reported. For Air-to-Ground ("ATG") carriers, the Commission should clarify how to report the unique ATG pilot channel assignments.

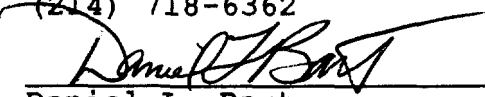
In addition, information required to be filed on the reports is not available when the applicant files the application. The applicant does not always have the station call sign, file number or grant date when making a filing. GTE asks the Commission to make clear if an applicant is responsible for this information or if the Commission will update the data base when it processes the application. GTE's experience has shown that frequencies and

operational parameters specified on the initial authorization can and often do change over the period between application and completion of construction. In the case of cellular, the Commission may wish to cross check the information in its data base with the information contained on FCC Form 489 when the facility is licensed as in-service.

Respectfully submitted,

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